

Location: Land North of Allens Hill Pinvin

Provision of Mushroom Growing facility (51,637 sqm), including six agricultural growing blocks (81 poly tunnels); central building including Manager's Office, cold room, canteen, toilets, showers & changing facilities; cold store and packaging building; Workshop and Machinery Storage; Farm Managers essential rural workers accommodation; floor mounted PV panels (0.227 ha); 6x Dock Levellers; Water Treatment Plant; 2no. Water Tanks; security gatehouse; provision of 122 parking spaces; balancing pond incorporating wetland habitat; associated hard and soft landscaping (including landscape bunds); security fencing, and associated infrastructure. Vehicular access will be taken from the A44. Application to involve the diversion of public footpaths (515C and 502C).

OBJECTION.

1. Introduction

- a. The Walsh Mushroom proposal is for a large Mushroom Growing Facility of over 13 hectares to the west of and close to the residential rural village of Pinvin.
- b. The development forms a significant agro-industrial plant by a large supplier of mushrooms and the UK and Irish markets on land that is currently under agricultural use.
- c. The planning application contains proposals to alleviate the serious environmental impacts caused by the site, but in fact further raise the prospects for harm to the residents of Pinvin.
- d. Pinvin Parish Council strongly objects to the building of what is effectively a large industrial plant on the very doorstep of the village.

2. Planning Policy

- a. Policy SWDP 2 'Development Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy', states:
"The open countryside is defined as land beyond any development boundary. In the open countryside, development will be strictly controlled and will be limited to dwellings for rural workers (see policy SWDP 19), employment development in rural areas (see SWDP 12), rural exception sites (see SWDP 16), buildings for agriculture and forestry, replacement dwellings (see SWDP 18), house extensions, replacement buildings and renewable energy projects (see policy SWDP 27) and development specifically permitted by other SWDP policies."

The production methods make no use of the land on which they are situated, and do not rely on their surroundings for any input to the process. All input material for the growing of mushrooms is brought into the site, and all output and waste product is taken off site. The conclusion therefore is that this is an industrial development that should be subject to the tests of planning succession which clearly have not been followed here. The Parish Council suggests the site has two factors which make it appealing to Walsh's, cost of the land, and convenience of transport.
- b. The site is situated less than 200m from residential properties in Pinvin, 200m from Pinvin Middle School, and just 120m from Pinvin Middle and First School playing fields. These sites will be impacted by noise from the site, by visual impact, both landscape and lighting, and most importantly by air quality and odour. The impacts are significant and do not result in a small conflict to the adopted policy as asserted in para 5.3 of the PS.

- c. Paragraph E of SWDP 8 states

"In addition to the sites allocated specifically for employment uses, the provision of employment land and the conversion of existing buildings to support job creation throughout south Worcestershire will be supported providing the development supports an existing business or new enterprise of a scale appropriate to the location"

The site occupies a 13.12 hectare (32.4 acre) site very approximately one third the size of the occupied land within Pinvin. The gap is only 120-200m between the site and the village. It is thus not of a scale appropriate to the location and thus contrary to SWDP8.

It is difficult to see how any reasonable person would countenance this proposal of a scale of inappropriate to the location on land very close to the village of Pinvin, and the Council objects to this application.

3. Air Quality and Odour

- a. Research indicates that particles (greater than 30 µm), responsible for most dust annoyance, will largely deposit within 100 m of sources. Intermediate particles (10-30 µm) can travel 200 – 300 m²⁷. Consequently, significant dust annoyance is usually limited to within a few hundred meters of its source. Smaller particles (<10 µm) are deposited slowly and may travel up to 1 km;

The assessment recognises that "the overall sensitivity of the surrounding area is considered to be medium with regards dust soiling."

The site is situated less than 200m from residential properties on Main Street, 200m from Pinvin Middle School, and just 120m from Pinvin Middle and First School playing fields. The effect of lower air quality, including mushroom spores and dust, will be on children's health, and particularly children who may have breathing difficulties. This combined with having the odour from mushrooms and compost around you for over a quarter of the time is not acceptable.

- b. The proposal speaks of seeking to reduce air pollution by 'constant monitoring of air quality' and the use of appropriate stack heights. The company's website refers to the stack height of one of their plants being increased to 50 meters (165 feet) to ameliorate problems with air quality. A tall stack will be a severe intrusion on the visual amenity of the area.
- c. The key method of controlling dust/bioaerosol emissions according to the AQ and Odour Assessment is "*good process and site design and subsequent housekeeping.*" This is not something that Walsh Mushrooms have a good record for, for example being fined £60,000 in 2015 at their site in Evesham for environmental failings.
- d. The assessment claims *that "The Site is located in a rural location. Odours from farming practices are therefore not uncommon in the area."* All farming round Pinvin is arable, therefore the incidence of odour is infrequent and not persistent
- e. The odour emission assessment assessments were conducted at sites approximately one third of that proposed, and therefore are not representative of this site. They also depend on the opinion of a single assessor, albeit professional, which is hardly objective. They try to claim that the incidence of odours is not significant as a result of on-site activities and thus no mitigation is necessary.
- f. The assessment relies on results from odour complaints data received from a number of Councils across the UK where smaller mushroom farms are situated. This has been selective as for instance complaints of smells have been received by Babergh District Council of odours originating from Capel Mushroom at Capel St Mary. The Council's Environmental Protection team has produced substantial evidence of previous complaints which demonstrate that odours do arise from the site to a degree that residents have been compelled to report to the Council.

- g. It seems likely that there are odours that will emanate from the site, and with the wind direction lying between WSW and WNW for 27.2% of the time over the past 5 years there will be an impact on any receptor lying to the east of the site.

Pershore Met Station – Percentage of Time wind blowing from:					
Direction	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
WSW	11.95%	14.61%	12.72%	12.05%	14.92%
W	6.47%	10.79%	7.56%	8.52%	7.01%
WNW	5.44%	8.16%	4.24%	6.36%	5.29%
Total	23.86%	33.36%	24.52%	26.93%	27.22%

4. Landscape

- a. The site subject to this proposal is on land to the west of the village of Pinvin. The land is situated on level ground, which slopes away towards Pinvin crossroads such that the site has a most obvious impact from the crossroads themselves and from residential properties on the south end of Main Street.

The proposal assesses the Local landscape character area as

“... agricultural land. Whilst Pinvin village is within proximity it is separated from the site by open pasture and arable fields, typically enclosed by hedgerow boundaries. The immediate local character of the study site is influenced by the adjoining busy roads and active agricultural context.”

Since there is less than 200m between some parts of the village and the 7m high building of the site it is hardly separated by open pasture, and brings a major industrial site within the village.

- b. Once the site is operational the assessment assumes that views of the site will be blocked or filtered (you will see it but with an occasional tree in the way?) by hedgerows around the site. Hedges are typically 3m high, with occasional taller trees, and the growing tunnels are 7m high, with the ventilator on top of this. The site will clearly be obvious from the village, especially at the south end and of premises situated to the west of Main Street
- c. The impact will be of a major industrial site located on agricultural land just metres away from the schools and residential properties.

5. Lighting

- a. It is disappointing that the consultants undertaking the lighting assessment did not visit the site *“due to the lack of street lighting on the main A44. As the site doesn't have any buildings present, the only artificial light in the area would be from passing car head lights”*
- b. The application proposes that lighting on the site should be to classification E3. That is inappropriate to a rural setting and will have effects similar to premises on the industrial estate on Abbey View Road where the lighting interferes with the enjoyment of properties on Abbey View Road and is visible in the village beyond the schools.
- c. The site is composed of many the plastic tunnels with their highly reflective surface and curved structure, as opposed to a shed which has limited variety of reflective surface and angles which has not been considered in the assessment.
- d. The likely effects of the proposals are an increase in sky glow, light spill to the surrounding area, and an increase in the light 'glare' which will have an effect the visual comfort of local residents. The only remedy suggested is the selection of appropriate

lighting, without being specific, and good practice. However good practice soon gets forgotten in the day-to-day running of a factory, and we believe that some form of planning condition will be necessary.

6. Drainage

- a. The implication of the water management statement is that beside rainfall on the site, there will be 720 m³ of water (1,200 m³ less the 480 m³ used in the growing process) to be drained from the site. This is proposed to go across the A44 to the ditch which leads to the headwall by Byrher on Allens Hill, and then down to Bow Brook, or alternatively to feed into the ditch next to the track to the caravan site and thus to the ditch on the north side of the A44. As the EA flood map shows this area is liable to flooding, and some considerable work would be necessary to alleviate this.

The WRS drainage engineer consider the proposals unacceptable and require further work. We would question whether the drainage engineer has taken into account the additional 720 m³ of water.

- b. The proposal is to connect to a foul water sewer located to the south east of the site within the existing A44 (Allen's Hill) carriageway, STWL have indicated that a connection would be acceptable. However the system as it exists cannot cope with addition drainage. There is risk of flooding from the Severn Trent pumped storage scheme which is situated next to/under Pinvin crossroads, and local residents on Allen's Hill and Main Street still complain that their toilets back up during heavy rain despite the pumped storage scheme.

7. Transport

- a. The proposal contains a forecast for a max of 52 HGV movement a day. They claim they will be evenly spread throughout an 8 hour day and therefore an average of 7 per hour. They are more likely to be over 4 hours, therefore the average would be 13/hr, with a max 50% high, say 20/hr. We are told that "*There will be no requirement for HGVs to route through Pinvin itself.*"
- b. The proposal is silent on whether they would tractor and trailer combinations would route through Pinvin, which leads the Parish Council to conclude that they would. Considerable community anxiety has already been expressed about the quantity and speed of traffic through the village with a pinch point outside the local schools. Pinvin has a Middle School, a First School and a Pre-School along Main Street and there is considerable congestion at the start and end of the school day. To add to that mix further large vehicles containing used compost would not be reasonable.
- d. The maximum daily number of movements is given in the proposal as 76, but far from being spread over 8 hours as suggested in the proposal they are more likely to be concentrated in 5 hours, which means 15 movement per hour. Tractor and trailer combinations are similar to HGVs, and in fact are very similar to articulated lorries in size and noise. A recent survey carried out by the Parish Council showed 220 HGVs travelling through the village of which 74 were articulated lorries or tractors. This number would double!
- e. If permission were to be granted we would seek that planning conditions would be imposed to prevent the use of the B4082 by HGVs serving the site, to ensure that vehicles serving the facility kept to the speed limit especially near the school with consideration given to the possibility of a 20mph area.

8. Noise

- a. The vehicle and machinery movements will create considerable noise pollution. Additionally the boilers and ventilation fans for the envisaged tunnels will be operating on 24 hours, 365 days per year. Measures to mitigate this noise level will not be able to eliminate all noise pollution in a quiet rural location.

9. Other Matters

- a. Walsh Mushrooms has a current packaging facility at Evesham. Should planning permission be granted for this site then at some point, in the near future, economic considerations would suggest the amalgamation with and expansion of the site leading to a large industrial area in a present greenfield area.
- b. The proposed plans for the site show a 10.5m gateway and track with footways either side which is labelled "*Right of way for farmer (access back to main road A44)*" A right of way is not necessary as described since access is available via the track from the field that has access next to the attenuation ponds, and via another gateway to the A44 nearer to Pinvin crossroads. A farmer certainly does not need footway for agricultural vehicles.

The track is obviously for a different purpose, and it seems probable that a proposal for a caravan site to accommodate workers at Walsh's is intended. In that circumstance a proposal should be brought forward at this time so that residents of Pinvin can properly consider the impacts this development will have upon the village.

10. Conclusion

- a. Pinvin Parish Council strongly objects to the building of this "Mushroom Growing Facility", otherwise known as a Mushroom Factory on the basis that it does not comply with SWDP 2 and SWDP 8.
- b. Should Wychavon decide to approve the application despite the objections that have been raised, the Parish Council would seek to be consulted over planning conditions covering air quality, emission of odour, lighting of the site, drainage, transport routes and noise.